

By May, DCS began to see improvements in both medical and dental screens tracked in the data system. In June 1999, 81% of children in state custody were documented as receiving a medical screen. This was a substantial increase from 33% in December of 1998. DCS continues to schedule exams and to document significant improvement in screenings into FY99-00.

The challenges of documenting and tracking medical care for children in custody remain, but through the EPSDT project DCS has taken an important step. The EPSDT project will lead to a better future for children who are in State of Tennessee custody.

Improving Child Abuse Detection and Prevention

Department of Children's Services Child Protective Services participated in several improvement initiatives. All newly employed Child Protective Services staff and selected law enforcement Child Protective Investigative Team members received the Reid Technique of Investigative Interviewing for Child Abuse Investigations training (John E. Reid & Associates, Inc.). The Department strengthened its ability to assist local efforts through the increased stationing of Child Protective Services staff in community Child Advocacy Centers. CPS staff are located in Child Advocacy Centers in Sullivan, Hamilton, Montgomery, Knox, Davidson, Robertson, Lawrence, Madison, Tipton, Henderson, and Shelby Counties. The Department worked with the State House and Senate to pass legislation establishing seven forensic child interviewer positions through Child Advocacy Centers located in each grand region of the state. The child interviewing specialists work with the Child Protective Investigative Teams (CPIT) to reduce the secondary trauma associated with abuse investigations. Interviews are held in the supportive environment of the Child Advocacy Center, with other CPIT members observing, unobtrusively, through remote video monitors.

Focusing on Child Outcomes

The Department of Children's Services improved contracting with service providers by focusing on desired outcomes. All contract agencies now have outcome measures for tracking services and performance and for matching contract agency services with the goals of the Department of Children's Services. By reporting and tracking outcome